



Wyoming Lender Alert

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Steven Despain, District Director

Making a Difference for Small Business in Wyoming



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Commercial Loan Specialist

Veterans Programs & Services

America owes a great debt to its Veterans. The SBA supports economic empowerment for veteran entrepreneurs and provides technical assistance to veterans and service disabled veterans through resource partners for those who are interested in business ownership.

The SBA is a very strong advocate for veteran entrepreneurs and offers many programs and services to help them succeed.

Veterans Business Development Officers <http://www.sba.gov/vets/rebs.html> in the SBA District Offices can direct Veterans to resource partners who provide their services free to support and help you plan your entrepreneurial adventure. Contact Dave Denke in the Wyoming District Office at 307-261-6523 or e-mail: David.Denke@sba.gov.

Veterans Business Outreach Program (VBOP) <http://www.sba.gov/vets/vbop.html> is designed to provide entrepreneurial development services such as business training, counseling and mentoring to eligible veterans owning or considering starting a small business.

Resource Partners Include:

Small Business Development Centers <http://www.sba.gov/wy/sbdcwy.html> - provide management assistance to current and prospective small business owners, offering one-stop assistance to small businesses by providing a wide variety of

information and guidance in central and easily accessible branch locations.

Service Corps of Retired Executives <http://www.sba.gov/wy/scowwy.html> - provides resources and counseling services online.

Women's Business Centers <http://www.Wyomingwomen.com> - Provide assistance and/or training in finance, management, marketing, procurement, and the Internet.

Business Information Centers <http://www.sba.gov/wy/bicwy.html> - or BIC's, are one-stop locations for information, education and training designed to help entrepreneurs start, operate and grow their business.

We would appreciate it if you would be sure to have your borrowers answer the critical loan application question, *Are you a Veteran?* This question can be found on every SBA loan application, specifically on SBA Form 4 and 4L. We are interested in all veterans, to include anyone ever enrolled in any part of the Service including the Reserves or National Guard.

SBA Breaks All-Time Loan Approval Record

Agency Has Already Surpassed 2003 Loan Numbers

The Small Business Administration announced that they have already backed more loans in 7(a) and 504 programs than ever before in its 51-year history.

As of August 6th the SBA's 7(a) loan program had guaranteed 67,493 loans in fiscal year 2004, more than the record 67,306 7(a) loans made in all of fiscal year 2003. In addition, the

agency has backed 6,974 loans through its 504 program, surpassing the 2003 record of 6,863. The 2004 fiscal year ends on September 30.

Compared to the same time period last year, these record-breaking numbers represent dramatic increases: 23 percent for 7(a) and 27 percent for 504.

In 2003, the SBA set all-time records in both major loan programs. It took less than a year to break those records. SBA is reaching out to more small businesses than ever before.

This is good news for small business owners. It means making a real difference in the lives of more and more entrepreneurs who will make a real difference in the economy. Over the last 11 months, American farms and businesses have created 1.5 million new jobs. When the economy is growing and jobs are being created; small businesses are always in the lead. They are the engine that drives the economy.

Not only has the SBA broken overall lending records, but it has also already exceeded 2003 numbers for some of the fastest growing segments of the small business community. With a month still remaining in the 2004 fiscal year, the SBA has surpassed the 2003 total number of loans to African Americans, Hispanics, Asian Americans, women and rural entrepreneurs. Compared with the same time period last year, the increases are even more dramatic.

Loan guarantees to African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian Americans are 30 percent ahead of their totals at the same date last year. Loans to women are up by 25 percent, and rural loans are 11 percent ahead.

A Reminder About October 1, 2004 & Fee Changes

Approximately two years ago and modified slightly in April of this year,

guaranty fees were reduced on loans under \$150,000 and on those loans over \$150,000 but not more than \$700,000. The legislation that enabled the above expires September 30th, 2004.

Health Savings Accounts What You Need To Know

Small business owners who want to provide health insurance for themselves, their families and their employees have a new program to help. The Health Savings Account (HAS), signed into law by President George W. Bush in December 2003, offers small business owners and employees what they need from health coverage: affordability, portability and freedom. HSAs can save small business owners up to 40 percent in health care costs. Some small business owners who previously couldn't offer health care to their employees can do so now through HSAs. Small business owners switching to HSAs from other, traditional health coverage plans can save money to buy new equipment and grow their businesses.

The U.S. Small Business Administration – your small business resource – provides tools and services to help small businesses succeed. The SBA offers the following questions and answers to help small business owners learn more about HSAs.

What is a Health Savings Account?

An HSA is a tax-free savings account that allows individuals to save their own money to pay for current health expenses and save for future qualified medical and retiree health expenses on a tax-free basis.

Can Small Business Owners Offer HSAs to Their Employees?

Yes. Employers can set up plans for employees with providers, which generally will be insurance companies and banks.

Who Is Eligible for an HSA?

To be eligible for an HSA, an individual must be covered by a High Deductible Health Plan, must not be covered by other health insurance (does not apply to specific-injury insurance and accident, disability, dental care, vision care, long-term care), must not be eligible for Medicare, and can't be claimed as a dependent on someone else's tax return.

What is a "High Deductible Health Plan?"

An HDHP is a health insurance plan with minimum deductible of \$1,000 (self-only coverage) or \$2,000 (family coverage). The annual out-of-pocket (including deductibles and co-pays) cannot exceed \$5,000 (self-only coverage) or \$10,000 (family coverage). HDHPs can have first-dollar coverage (no deductible) for preventive care and higher out-of-pocket (copays & coinsurance) for non-network services.

Can Small Business Owners Contribute to an HSA?

Yes. Contributions to HSAs can be made by either the employer or the employee, or both. Contributions by the individual employee are "above-the-line" deductions. Those by the employer are not taxable to the employee (excluded from income). Contributions may also be made by others on behalf of an eligible individual and deducted by the individual. All contributions are aggregated.

How Much Can Small Business Owners Contribute to an HSA?

The maximum contribution is the lesser of the deductible amount under the HDHP or (for 2004) \$2,600 for individuals or \$5,150 for family coverage. These dollar limits will be adjusted for inflation each year.

Do HSA Funds Roll Over Year After Year?

Yes, the money invested in an HSA rolls over from one year to the next.

Do Small Business Owners Have Any Control Over the Money Invested in an HSA?

In most cases the employee will have control over the assets. However, some small business owners are exploring the idea of having control over the investments.

Can You Roll The Money in an HSA Over Into an IRA?

You cannot roll the HSA funds over into an IRA. They will stay in the HSA or be rolled into another HSA.

How Can Distributions From an HSA Be Used?

The amounts can be distributed for either qualified medical or other expenses. If the amount distributed is used for qualified medical expenses, then the distribution is tax free. If the amount distributed is used for other than qualified medical expenses, the amount distributed will be taxed and, for individuals who are not disabled or over age 65, subject to a 10 percent tax penalty.

Do You Have Additional Questions About HSAs?

E-mail the Treasury Department:

HSAINfo@do.treas.gov.

It is imperative that you to keep your PC protected!

You have heard about hackers who develop viruses, worms, spyware and Trojan Horses that can get into your PC to ruin your files or even steal your identity. But you don't have to worry about this. There are many companies and individuals who are constantly developing protective measures that block and neutralize these malicious programs. It's not hard to keep your machine safe. If you follow the **three steps** outlined below your PC will withstand any known threat that can be launched against it.

1. Install and maintain an Antivirus Program:

If you run a Windows operating system it is necessary for you to install an antivirus program and keep the virus definitions for it updated!

2. Install a Firewall Program:

The name 'firewall' comes from a wall used in early automobiles that kept engine fires from reaching the passenger compartment. A firewall on your PC does the same thing, except instead of keeping fire out, it keeps hackers out. It also lets you know if a hacker is testing the ports (doors) on your PC to see if he can gain easy entry. If any are unprotected they are in, just like that!

3. Install the latest Critical Updates for Windows:

If you run Windows, you need to frequently check and download the latest Microsoft recommended updates for your PC.

To view and install these critical updates visit the Microsoft web site: <http://v4.windowsupdate.microsoft.com/> Microsoft will scan your PC for latest critical updates required for your operating system.

Download and install all recommended critical updates. Since Microsoft's Windows operating systems are the most prevalent in the world they are targets of choice hackers! The updates help make your operating system itself more resistant to being compromised by hackers.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. The up front time and cost of installing these programs is nothing compared to what it will take you to recover your PC and possibly your identity after it's been compromised by the destructive programs cruising through the Internet looking for unprotected machines to attack!

2004 WYOMING MINORITY SMALL BUSINESS PERSON OF THE YEAR

CASPER – Renee Brost, President of Cast Performance Bullet Company, has been selected as the 2004 Wyoming Minority Small Business (MSB) Person of the Year by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). The award will be presented to Ms. Brost, at the Riverton Chamber of Commerce office, on September 8th at 11:00am.

Each year since 1983, the President designates one week for recognition and celebration of the accomplishments of minority entrepreneurs. The award selection process includes evaluation of growth in sales, profits, and employees; participation in community and charitable affairs; overcoming adversities; uniqueness and special attributes of the business; and the use of other minority firms as suppliers or subcontractors.

Wyoming is proud to celebrate the accomplishments of Renee, and her business. Ms. Brost was selected for this prestigious award for his entrepreneurial skills, hard work, adaptability, leadership, determination, and service to the community.

2005 SBA SMALL BUSINESS AWARD NOMINATIONS

You must have someone in mind for a small business award! Who has made the greatest impact in your community? Who would you like to highlight? Help us recognize outstanding small business leaders in your local community. Complete this simple format and send the information to us!

AWARD CATEGORIES

Please check one or more potential categories:

Small Business Person of the Year:

For developing an outstanding, growing business; innovative product(s), increasing jobs, increasing sales, overcoming adversity, and community contributions.

For further consideration, a nomination binder with detailed materials will be requested for this nomination.

Small Business Exporter of the Year:

Significantly increased export sales and profits, encouraging other firms to export, increased jobs through exports, and innovative methods of creating markets.

SBA Young Entrepreneur of the

Year: Owner will not reach 30th birthday by June 1, 2003, three-year evidence of success in sales and profits, increased jobs,

innovative products, demonstrated potential.

Entrepreneurial Success Award: Must own and operate a business that was launched "small" by SBA size standards, received SBA assistance and has since grown into a large business.

Small Business Advocates of the Year:

Those who promote small business, including volunteering time and services to small business interests and groups, advocating the cause of small business in the legislative process. Advocates may or may not be small business owners.

Minority Small Business Advocate of the Year

Women in Business Advocate of the Year

Veteran Small Business Advocate of the Year

Small Business Journalist of the Year

Small Business Legal Assistance WY award

Family-Owned Small Business

Financial Services Advocate

(Accountant advocate merged with this category)

Home Based Business Advocate of the Year

– Those who have sought to improve the climate for home based businesses

NOMINEE INFORMATION

I nominate

Title

Company/Organization

Address

City

Zip

Phone

Fax

Nominees's Qualifications for this Award—give short description (please attach brief statement on why this business/advocate should be considered:

When nominating a business owner please complete the following: Is the company operating profitably

Years in business

Number of employees

Gross annual sales \$

SIC/NAICS code

NOMINATOR'S INFORMATION:

Nominator Name

Title

Organization

Address

City

Zip

Phone

Fax

Reply by **OCTOBER 20, 2004** mail (or fax 307-261-6535) this form to:

Beth Hink, U.S. Small Business Administration 100 East B Street, Federal Building Suite 4001, P.O. Box 44001, Casper, Wyoming 82602

For more information, please contact: Beth at (307) 261-6502. Self-nominations accepted. This format may be duplicated.

SBA will contact the nominator with details. Thanks for your support!

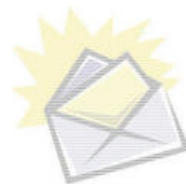
Address Change for the Small Business Administration Office in Casper!

Effective August 23rd, the address for the Wyoming District Office will change.

Although the Postal Service will forward our mail for the next year, it would be helpful if you would change your records to reflect our new address:

Small Business Administration
Wyoming District Office
100 East B Street, Room 4001,
Federal Building, **P.O. Box 44001**,
Casper, Wyoming 82602

The telephone number remains the same 307-261-6500 or toll free 800-776-9144, extension 1.



UPCOMING EVENTS

September 1 – Women's Roundtable Casper & Dubois

September 2 – Women's Roundtable Laramie

September 7 – Women's Roundtable Jackson

September 14 – Women's Roundtable Sheridan

September 16 – Women's Roundtable Powell

September 18 – Wyoming Women's Conference - Douglas

September 21 – Women's Roundtable Cody

September 28 – WNET Call – Call Debra Farris 261-6510 or e-mail: debra.farris@sba.gov for information